Abstract of the Disclosure

1   The method of creating and hosting customized online gatherings ("parties"). One or

2   more server computers communicate via the Internet with Web browsers operated by users. The

3   server computer(s) store data defining one or more template web pages that implement one or

4   more activities in which users may participate. One of the users serves as the host of the online

5   gathering and provides a guest list identifying other invited users. In response to the host's

6   selection of a gathering type, and possibly a specific theme for the gathering type, the server

7   constructs a set of preliminary web pages that conform to the selected gathering type and theme.

8   Thereafter, the host may further "decorate" the preliminary pages by supplying additional or

9   replacement text, additional or replacement graphical image files, audio files or video clips that

10   are incorporated into the template web pages to produce the desired customized online gathering.

11   The host may designate a time or time range during which the online gathering will occur, and

12   may provide an invitation list that may include email addresses of users who are then sent email

13   invitations in advance of the scheduled gathering time. If the gathering is open only to invited

14   users, access to the online gathering is restricted to those users who present a predetermined

15   identification code. The online gathering as implemented by the customized Web pages

16   comprises one or more community activities, such as chat rooms, threaded discussion bulletin

17   boards, or picture-viewing rooms, in which invited users can view information supplied by the

18   host or other guests. The server that executes some or all of the functions required for accepting

19   customization data and a guest list from the host, and that handles the request/response dialog

20   with the invited users to execute the online gathering, may advantageously take the form of an

21   application service provider (ASP) server which operates independently of collaborating servers

22   who utilize the services of the ASP server.